

Victoria's Heritage: An Opportunity for the Development of Geolocational Digital Tour Guides



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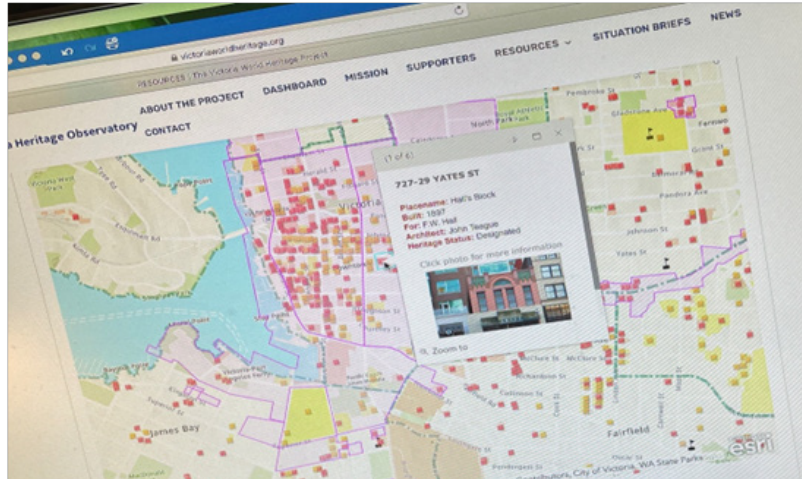
SITUATION BRIEF # 1

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Victoria's network of heritage sites, including concentrations of heritage monuments and landscape features such as Old Town, Chinatown and stretches of the Gorge Waterway provides an excellent test-bed for geolocational cell-phone or web-based interpretive tools. The fundamental role of such tools would be to link the physical heritage resources to community stories and other aspects of the region's intangible heritage.

A three-fold audience is anticipated:

- Tourist/local, on-location, immediate grabbing stories, human interest, entertaining.
- History/architectural aficionado or student, on location: more challenging information, engaging, informing, educational
- Serious researcher, journalist: not on location: home/office/institution-based research, writing, creative media



A regional comprehensive heritage website

A pan-municipal heritage focused website is needed. This would address the art and history of downtown Victoria but also the surrounding area. It would need to be developed in collaboration with the regional heritage foundations, First Nations, municipalities, and historic sites. The needs of local citizens and others who are accessing the information on personal computers should be the primary focus.

A very good example is one developed for Calgary - [Heritage Calgary](#).

Heritage Calgary is a registered charity that is doing what the Victoria Civic Heritage Trust and the Victoria Heritage Foundation are doing. It is mainly funded by the City of Calgary which maintains the full list of important buildings. Victoria Civic Heritage Trust has no website and no listing. The Victoria Heritage Foundation has a website and a good mapping and search system limited to Victoria.

A regional heritage phone app

One app or many? One interface with numerous options beyond the front end. Or two or three with no compromises while trying to achieve inter-functionality.

This could be an off-the-shelf like Drift-scape (see below), while a plan is developed for something more sophisticated 5-7 years out when a larger base of actual reference resources has been organized, data-bases populated etc.

A second issue is the need to populate the back end of any Guide with information and media: videos, images, sound clips, links. Perhaps with the assistance of the Hallmark Society or local educational institutions story production could be crowd sourced by willing informed/expert collaborators. Or, for instance, made into curriculum-based school projects.

An app suitable for mobile device use; android and iPhone, could guide citizens and tourists to Victoria's heritage and history. These guides could be GPS activated. The users download a free app and access information about the art, buildings and landscape features in the region. Commercial app developers charge a fee for uploading and maintaining information.

In exploring the various options currently available, the best seems to be Driftscape.com a Canadian firm supplying this type of services to other Canadian places. The service is one recommended by the Heritage Trust for Canada and is used at a number of heritage sites. Costs need to be obtained.

Features & Functionality

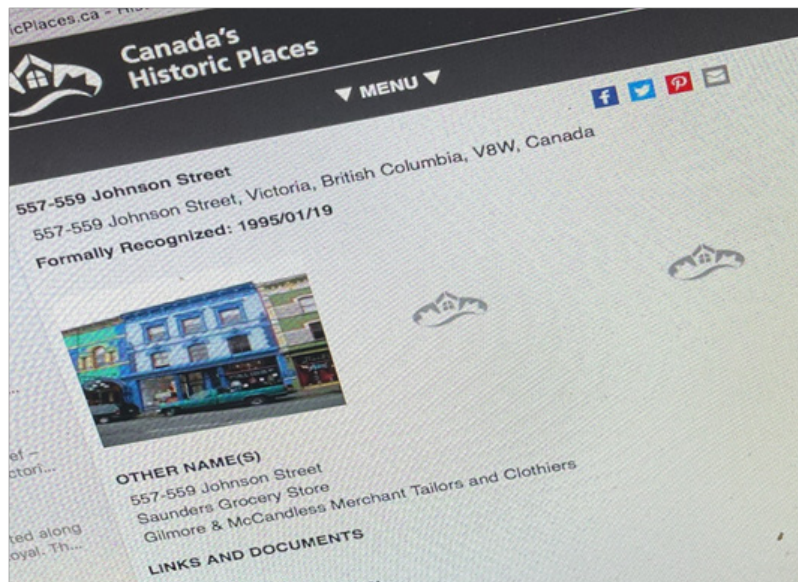
- Geolocation
- Interactive Map
- Qr Code Reader
- User Content Contribution (UGC)?
- Community/comments/moderation?
- Other?

Scope Considerations

- IOS and Android (Canada usage 54% to 46%)
- Mobile and Tablet
- Backend Hosting/Storage (+Security Protocols)
- CMS
- Content: What kinds? (Images, video, audio, copy, web links)
- Content: Will it require production? (Formatting, ongoing maintenance, etc)
- App Store account set up?
- Design (AppStore & Google Play): icons, design, descriptions, keywords, video demo Optimization (For better rank)
- Website to promote/support the App

Specs/Requirements

- Does it have to Work offline?
- Does it require User profiles. Save local or to server?
- Will it be integrated with other services?
- What is the data collection strategy?



Logistics

- How will the app be Promoted?
- What is the Business Model/Monetization Strategy? (Free, pay to download, Ads, feature unlocks, in app purchase,)
- How will payment occur? (app store or site)
- Approach: MVP and future feature releases?
- Development Time line needs articulating.
- A budget needs to be developed.
- Post launch ongoing budget should include hosting, optimization, enhancements, push services, scale back end as it grows, iOS updates, etc).
- Project Stakeholders needed to be identified.
- Risks/Barriers: There are many including city approvals, building owners consents, copyright issues, development and on-going costs, funding sources, technical support.

Observations

- The nature of this proposal implies a consortium of local stakeholders need to be engaged: First Nations political and cultural entities, municipalities, local heritage foundations and historical agencies, educational institutions – both K-12, and post-secondary.
- The ideal is timely in that numerous federal and provincial digitization initiatives, aimed particularly those undertaken by the cultural sector, are in play.
- Readers of this Technical Briefing who might be interested in developing digital media-based heritage interpretation programs should contact the UNESCO-Victoria World Heritage Project Group.

<https://victoriaworldheritage.org>